

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

- 1. Project Title:** Meagher County Sportsmen Association
- 2. Type of Proposed Action:** Bring commercial power to rifle and pistol range.
- 3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:** The range is on a leased 66 acre parcel of land, occupying a portion of SE ¼ Section 1, R6E, T9N and portion of SW ¼ Section 6, R7E, T9N, located approximately 2 miles Northwest of White Sulphur Springs on the Scott Jackson Ranch. The lessor is Scott Jackson, 116 Jackson road, White Sulphur Springs, Montana 59645.
- 4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices)
- 5. Need for the Action(s):** Currently commercial power is not available on site, and power is supplied by a sometimes unreliable portable generator. The generator does not supply the consistent quality power needed for operations and the estimated costs for the operation of the generator are approximately \$6.50 to \$7.00 per hour.
- 6. Objectives for the Action(s):** Provide safe, reliable, cost efficient power for range and target operations.

7. Map:

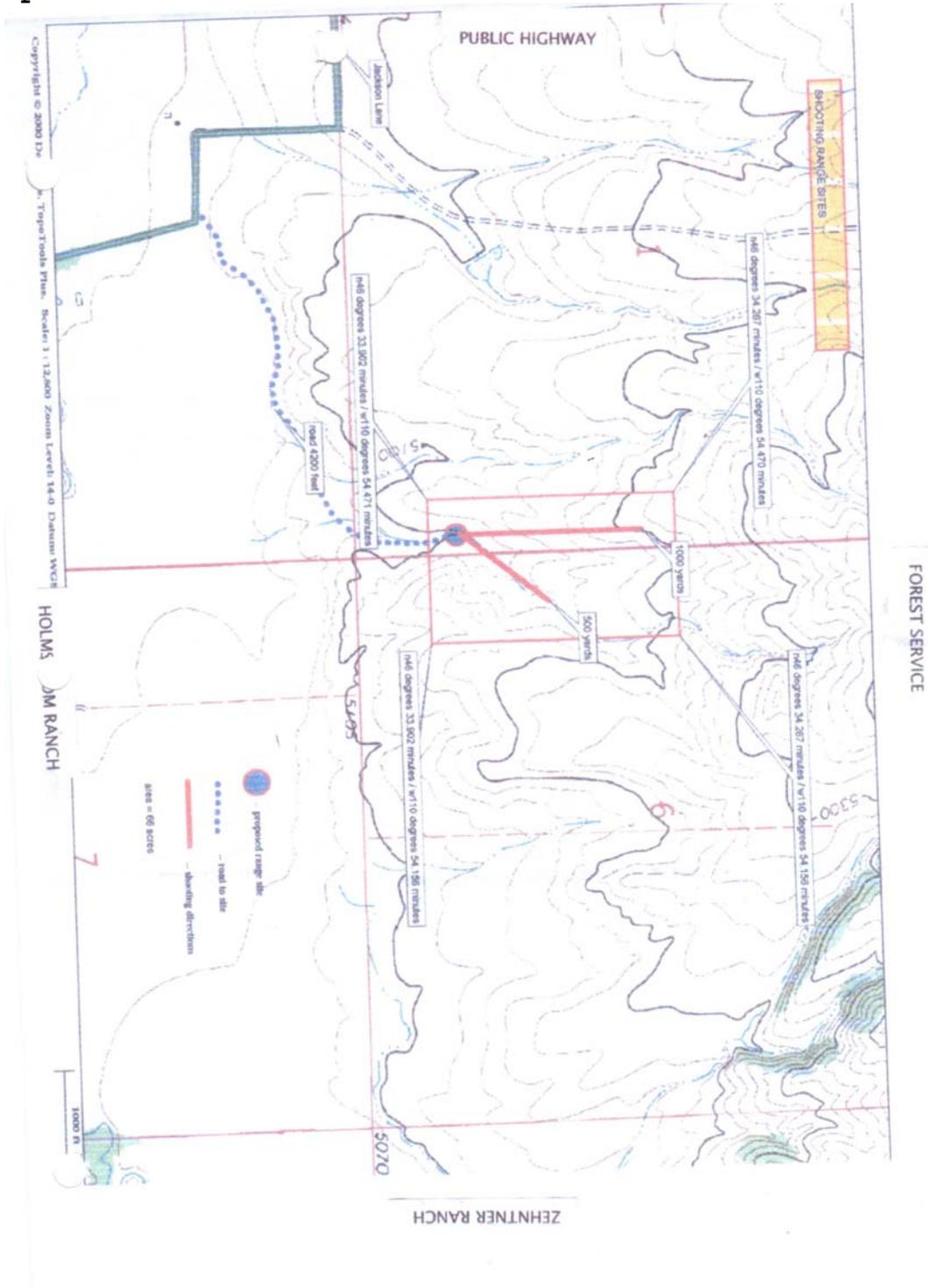


Figure 1 - Location of Meagher County Sportsmen Association ranges.
 8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be

directly affected: Site is a 66 acre parcel of land located on the Scott Jackson Ranch and leased from Scott Jackson of White Sulphur Springs, Montana.

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project): The range parcel is located on a private ranch and is primarily agricultural and grazing land. Area is used for grazing cattle during calving season and the land adjacent to the range site is all grazing or hay land.

10. Description of Project: Bringing commercial power approximately 1 mile to the existing rifle and pistol ranges. Buildings have already been wired to accept commercial power. Installation will require excavation, concrete work, and both mechanical and electrical installation.

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
Northwest Energy	State electrical Permit for hook-up of utilities

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$21,307.50

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

Approximately 13 % of the town belongs to the association, and the County Commissioners are some of the association's main supporters. Range currently supports Hunter Education, Bow Hunter Education and 4H air gun shooting. Range is open to the public, community organizations and local law enforcement. Estimated 2007 competitive and non-competitive shooters using the range is approximately 350.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors, contractors and the lessor.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Jerry Churchill, Range Manager

P.O. Box 734

White Sulphur, MT 59645

(406) 547-3707

16. Other Pertinent Information:

Meagher County Sportsmen Association has been in existence since 1993 and the current range has been in use since 2003. Shooting range applications require the participant’s governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance.

Resolution Date: December 18, 2006

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist - The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are no live streams or ponds on the site and no delineated wetlands.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		#4
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

4. The site is adjacent to surrounding agricultural land and range itself is still partially used for grazing cattle during the calving season.

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large.

7. Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? No

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? No

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

- **Alternative A** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project) Bringing commercial power to the range.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** area will remain as an active shooting complex using portable generator for power needs.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Two alternatives have been considered, A (Proposed Alternative) and B (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (A) nor the no action alternative (B) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences for the acceptance of alternatives A to provide safe reliable and cost efficient power to the range operations.
- The No Action Alternative would be not to provide commercial power to the range and continue on using portable generator(s) for required power. Land use would remain the same. Present activities of the range without the proposed commercial power would continue. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

None

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):

None

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
Jerry Churchill, P.O. Box 734, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties leased by the Meagher County Sportsmen Association of White Sulphur Springs, MT. The new lease became affective in March 2006 and has the right of first refusal if the lessor was to try and sell the property. The fact that the Sportsmen Association and obtained all of the required permits and the routine low impact activity proposed, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The history of the Meagher County Sportsmen Association providing shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the addition of commercial power as proposals outlined in Para. 2 & 10.

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Ecological Assessments
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Date Completed: July 11, 2007

PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None Required

Describe public involvement, if any:

None